

FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO
THULE
821st Air Base Group

—
SERVE AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD
TIMES
Thule AB, Greenland

June 2008

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Thule Times Editorial Staff

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Nearly all of the U.S. Air Force team at Thule Air Base poses for a group photo in windy weather outside the base's air terminal June 10. While there are approximately 700 people on base, only about 140 are active duty Air Force members.

Base commander prepares to say goodbye

Col. Lee-Volker Cox
821st Air Base Group commander

One year ago today, I remember standing on the platform of the DC-8 stairs looking out at the Top of the World in complete awe and amazement thinking, "This is going to be home for the next year." Every step I took down the stairs, new ideas and feelings flowed through me. What will it be like? Look, I see an iceberg! Where's the snow? Is that a mosquito?! Am I ready to command America's northernmost base? God, I'm the luckiest man on Earth!

Then it happened, I stepped onto the flightline, greeted by a line of people welcoming Michelle and me to Thule Air Base.

Nothing could have prepared me for what was going to be a year-long experience of a lifetime. From the beautiful icebergs, sunsets and bright moons in winter to the children of Savisavik to seeing Narwhales, seals and fresh polar bear tracks, it has been one amazing adventure after another. Of course, -50 degree Fahrenheit temperatures with 120 mph Arctic winds howl-

ing off of the ice cap will forever change my definition of cold.

It's been an extraordinary year!

We achieved tremendous accomplishments.

Winning Air Force Space Command's Verne Orr Award for the best use of our people and resources only highlights your hard work and dedication to our space superiority missions and Team Thule.

For starters, we began work on repairing and upgrading our power production and distribution system and the airfield. We developed a Creativity Center, built the state-of-the-art Midnight Sun Theater, established a virtual firing range and brought in a new armory. For the first time in several years, Operation BOXTOP exceeded its objectives. Our science and research partnerships culminated with the first Arctic overland traverse in over 40 years, establishing a new supply route to Summit and Neem. Over 60 of us took the Polar Bear swim plunge last August.

See **GOODBYE**, page 2

GOODBYE from page 1

It's been a fascinating year!

As a family, we celebrated First Night, lit the South Mountain Star and then huddled together for 4 months of darkness. We celebrated First Light, after which we huddled together for a few more months until the roads cleared, the storms disappeared and the 24-hour sun reappeared. Our family grew when for Armed Forces Day, a record number of hunters, sleds and dogs traveled up to five days on the ice to race and share their culture with us. Together, we took care of our bothers and sisters and raised over \$24,000 for Operation Julemand to support the children and elderly in the five surrounding villages.

It's been an amazing year!

Until a few weeks ago, I would ask everyone leaving Thule Air Base, "What's your favorite memory?" Most would say, I don't know, there are so many. So I would press them a little harder until they came up with something. I know now, that wasn't fair.

People are asking me the same question and I can't come up with a specific answer. For me, my favorite memory is simply Thule -- the people, the mission, the beautiful nature -- the essence of what makes Thule special. Like many before me, I leave the Arctic Circle and Thule Air Base a changed man.

I don't know what I'll be thinking when I climb the stairs of the DC-8 this Friday. But I do know what I'll be thinking when I turn around on the platform to look at the Top of the World for one last time. God, I'm the luckiest man on Earth! I spent a year with the Thule Family at an extraordinary place doing an extraordinary mission with extraordinary people.

I may be leaving Greenland, but Greenland will never leave me. Team Thule, it's been a fantastic year. God Bless! Thank you--Tak--Qujanaq!

Editor's Note: Colonel Cox will be stationed at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., after he departs Thule.



Photos by Col. Lee-Volker Cox

Members of the 821st Air Base Group staff pause for a photo prior to embarking on a hike up Mount Dundas July 9. The steep hike up the approximately 800 foot high mountain took about 25 minutes.



Thule Air Base celebrates Sankt Hans Day

Team Thule gathered together June 23 to celebrate midsummer's eve with a traditional bonfire and refreshments.





Multi-national base recognizes Greenlandic National Day



Thule Air Base celebrated Greenlandic National Day June 21-22. The celebration became a two-day event after poor weather pushed part of the activities to a second day.

A flag-raising ceremony at the 821st Air Base Group headquarters kicked off the festivities. Members of the nearby villages, along with members of the Thule City Council led the events, which also included ceremonial flag raisings at other locations on base and at Dundas Village, a traditional Greenlandic dinner and barbecue.



Photos by 1st Lt. Nicole Langley

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The activities on June 21 concluded with an impressive traditional Greenlandic meal at the Top of the World Club, featuring drum dancers from Qaanaaq, a village approximately 65 miles north of the base. Some members of the audience also got an opportunity to test their drum dancing skills.



After the dinner, a band from Qaanaaq provided TOW Club patrons with Greenlandic, Danish and American music to dance to.



On June 22, the Thule City Council hosted a barbecue at the Pavilion, featuring some traditional Greenlandic delicacies including seal, whale and dried fish (featured at left).



Photos by 1st Lt. Nicole Langley

Commander of U.S. Strategic Command visits Top of the World

1st Lt. Nicole Langley

821st Air Base Group Public Affairs

"This trip was as unique as going into space," said Gen. Kevin Chilton, commander of U.S. Strategic Command at the end of his whirlwind Thule Air Base tour July 1-2.

The commander and his wife, Cathy, saw the base's unique space superiority mission firsthand and the men and women who make it happen during their recent trip to the Top of the World.

During their time here, they visited numerous sites on base, including the 12th Space Warning Squadron's Ballistic Missile Early Warning System, the 22nd Space Operations Squadron's Detachment 3, as well as several quality-of-life focused sites from dormitories to the Fitness and Sports Center – all in less than 18 hours.

However, one of the most important parts of the trip for the general was getting to meet the people. From a breakfast with enlisted Airmen to lunch with company grade officers, he took every opportunity to get to know the men and women who carry out the mission at Thule.

At the end of his tour, he described the best part of his trip to the DoD's northernmost installation in the world.

"Meeting the entire Team Thule – Americans, Danes, Canadians, Greenlanders and contractors – that was the best part!" he explained.

After an aerial tour of the base and just part of the 232,000 acres that make up the Thule Defense Area and the Air Force's largest overseas base, he visited BMEWS.

While at that site, he visited the on-duty crew on the operations floor and saw the continuing progress being made to the Upgraded Early Warning Radar. While there, he highlighted the importance of the radar and mission that the operators there carry out 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

"It's absolutely vital that this radar be up all the time!" General Chilton emphasized. "This is the cornerstone for early warning."

As he spoke to the group, he explained the number one rule of any type of battle – regardless of the location, whether it is on land, sea, in the air or in space – that is knowing what's on the other side of that hill.

"This site is absolutely critical for that reason," he pointed out.

The general also got to see and experience the newest piece of training equipment at Thule – the 821st Security Forces Squadron's virtual firing range, the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000.

Prior to April, the 821st SFS did not have a range for any of the Airmen on base to train and maintain firing qualifications.

Without this range training capability at Thule, he explained that it would be like going to pilot training without ever getting into a plane.

General Chilton attributed the addition of the virtual range to the leadership on base who worked to make it a reality.

"It's a testament to the team that we got this range up here," he said.

The general also spoke to most of the Air Force population at a Commander's Call prior to departing the base.

"Thule is absolutely essential for the defense of the United States of America," he emphasized to the crowd. "Thank you for the sacrifices you make for being up here."

In addition to visiting numerous work centers on base and meeting the multi-national Team Thule, the general and his wife also hiked onto the Polar Ice Cap and saw some of the unique sites around the base.

"Thule is a true National asset and I wish every American could come here, meet the people and see this part of the world," he said. "I would love to share Thule with as many people as possible. I'm glad my wife could share it with me."



General Kevin Chilton, U.S. Strategic Command commander and his wife, Cathy, along with the general's political advisor, Kirk Augustine, got a bird's eye view of Thule Air Base, July 2, when they flew in the Air Greenland helicopter from main base to the site of the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System. The Chilton's tour of Thule Air Base was part of a 17-day trip, with other stops in Germany and France.

Photo by 1st Lt. Nicole Langley

Chief's Corner: Passion, Purpose, Peak Performance

Chief Master Sgt. Al Herring
821st Air Base Group superintendent

World renowned author and motivation coach Zig Ziglar writes books and gives motivational lectures all over the world on the power of the 3Ps. I believe they are essential to what we do as Airmen. So much so, I wanted to discuss them in this edition of the Chief's Corner.

How passionate are you about your job? Would you do it if the Air Force said they could no longer pay you? For some, those are tough questions and those few will continue reading. The others, I am sure I lost your attention when you read between the lines, "work for free – whoa, not me."

Let me share with you that if you develop a passion for what you do, your world becomes a better place because of it. Get passionate about changing the world you live in to the one you dream about. It must be sustainable, and the very best way to create that synergy is through your service to others. If we can motivate one Airman, inspire one co-worker then we have gone beyond ourselves and we take others on the ride with us.

But, passion without purpose is like having that shiny new car and not



enough money to buy gas at four dollars a gallon, but it looks good in the driveway. We heard about purposeful action at a recent change-of-command ceremony, but let's take it a step further.

Identify your role here at Thule and pursue it with an unyielding devotion to duty and watch others pick up on your momentum and develop their own set of goals to make the place better for those that follow. Develop a sense of purpose that ensures mission accomplishment, that takes care of every Airman from the new airman basic fresh from the security forces technical training school to the most senior general officer that steps off the DC-8 to visit us here at Team Thule.

Take pride in what you do and realize that no mission is complete without key inputs from your job. Create that kind of passion and purpose and you will develop a work environment where everyone exudes confidence and watch your Airmen grow and your unit reach peak performance! Peak performance levels are hard to achieve, but when the chemistry is just right, those magical moments happen and it makes you feel proud – I mean Team Thule Proud.

Peak performance is the "Outstanding" your unit receives from UCI/ORIs, it's the pat on the back from the supervisor, the firm handshake from the group commander and that look square in the eyes that says it all, you were on top of your game today and your team was better because of it. Those days are what we are looking to create at Team Thule. We need to reach that rare air that comes not from climbing Mount Dundas, but when we can mesh passion, purpose and peak performance into one.

Teammates, we need to achieve that level, and I know we will, so when we walk past each other with the soon-to-be famous Thule greeting, "outstanding and getting better," we give it more meaning.

Creativity Room opens at Community Center

Col. Lee-Volker Cox, 821st Air Base Group commander, and Thomas Schiby, Activities supervisor, cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the new Creativity Room located in the Community Center here June 16. The Creativity Room will provide Team Thule members with several arts and crafts activities ranging from a lapidary to polish rocks, laser engraving, photo lab and a portrait studio.



Photo by 1st Lt. Nicole Langley

Thule Spotlight



The outgoing squadron commanders say goodbye to the base and display their blue noses at a combined farewell party June 7.



Miki Fleischer, Greenland Contractors apprentice, poses for a photo after graduating from the four-year GC Apprentice program as an auto mechanic June 20. The program currently has 12 trainees.



Submitted photo

Left: Patrick King, 21st Contracting Squadron's Detachment 1, receives the Innovation Award from U.S. Ambassador James Cain at the Embassy in Copenhagen June 9 for providing outstanding support to Thule Air Base.



Photos by 1st Lt. Nicole Langley

Thule's newest master sergeant and technical sergeant selects pose for a photo with the base leadership following a celebration held in their honor June 27 at the Top of the World Club here.

Technical sergeant selects include:

Staff Sgt. Willie Andino, 821st Support Squadron
 Staff Sgt. Jon Becker, 821st Security Forces Squadron
 Staff Sgt. Laurie Schieble, 821st SFS
 Staff Sgt. Richard Wells, 12th Space Warning Squadron

Master sergeant selects include:

Tech. Sgt. Wendi Atchley, 821st SPTS
 Tech. Sgt. Kenneth Bartells, 821st SFS
 Tech. Sgt. Michael Caulder, 821st SPTS
 Tech. Sgt. Keith Munroe, 821st Air Base Group
 Tech. Sgt. Mark Wakeam, 821st SPTS
 Tech. Sgt. Jason Milam, 821st SPTS

New team members

Michael Gagnon, from Boston, Mass., and New York City, and C. Frederick Cady of Lake Delton, Wis., recently joined the Harris IT Services staff as ARTS satellite control operators at Thule Tracking Station. Mr. Gagnon comes to Thule with over 20 years of communication, computer and network control experience for Raytheon and other contractors. Mr. Cady comes to Thule with 24 years of Air Force and civil service experience in air traffic control and tactical and strategic aircraft maintenance experience.

Promotions



First Lieutenant Kevin Wiacek, 12th Space Warning Squadron, was promoted to the rank of captain in a ceremony on the 12th SWS operations floor June 12.

Master Corporal Sandy Sutherland, Canadian Forces-12th Space Warning Squadron, was promoted to the rank of sergeant in a ceremony on the 12th SWS operations floor June 20. The rank of sergeant in the CF is equivalent to a senior NCO in the Air Force.



First Lieutenants Kevin McClure and Nick Van Elsacker, 821st Support Squadron, were promoted to the rank of captain in a ceremony June 5.

Distinguished visitors

Right: A U.S. Embassy in Denmark-sponsored group poses for a photo with members of Thule Air Base during a brief visit here June 18. Pictured from left to right are: Theresa Nielsen, U.S. Embassy management assistant; Chief Master Sgt. Al Herring, 821st Air Base Group superintendent; Inge Bulck, Greenland Contractors site manager; Col. Lee-Volker Cox, 821st ABG commander; Henrik Jepsen, U.S. Embassy senior political specialist; Peter Hummelgaard Thomsen, President of Social Democratic Party Youth Organization; Anne Paulin, International Secretary for Social Democratic Party Youth; Bjarne Fog Corydon, Chief Foreign Policy Advisor for Social Democratic Party leader, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, and head of SDP Political-Economic Department; and Annika Smith, Political Assistant for Greenlandic MP (Siumut), Juliane Henningsen.



Left: Maj. Gen. Del Eulberg, Air Force A7C at the Pentagon, visited Thule Air Base June 12-13. The primary purpose of his visit was to see the unique infrastructure and power production challenges at Thule. While here he visited numerous sites on base and received the mission brief, in order to better understand the base's space superiority mission. In the photo, Master Sgt. Scott Baber explains the status of the huge diesel engines in the base's main power plant to General Eulberg.

New leaders assume command at Thule Air Base

821st Security Forces Squadron



Capt. Daniel Massey receives the 821st Security Forces Squadron guidon from **Col. Lee-Volker Cox**, 821st Air Base Group commander, as he assumes command during the squadron's change-of-command ceremony June 12 at the Top of the World Club.

Detachment 3



On behalf of **Lt. Col. Steven Staats**, 22nd Space Operations Squadron commander, **Col. Lee-Volker Cox**, 821st ABG commander, passes the guidon to incoming Detachment 3 commander, **Maj. Alistair Funge** at the detachment's change-of-command ceremony June 18 at the TOW Club.

821st Support Squadron



Maj. Dayton Nooner receives the 821st Support Squadron guidon from **Col. Lee-Volker Cox**, 821st ABG commander, as he assumes command during the squadron's change-of-command ceremony June 19 at the TOW Club.

12th Space Warning Squadron



Lt. Col. David Meteyer receives the 12th Space Warning Squadron guidon from **Col. Chris Crawford**, 21st Operations Group commander, as he assumes command during the squadron's change-of-command ceremony June 26 at the TOW Club.

Memorial recognition program and clean up



After a presentation by Chaplain (Capt.) Tony Wade, installation chaplain, in memoriam of those who have lost their lives on base or in the surrounding area, Team Thule members went out and cleaned up the 10 memorial markers on base June 23.

Above: Tech. Sgt. Beau Taylor, Staff Sgt. Mariah Walker and Staff Sgt. Tyler Altenhofen, 12th Space Warning Squadron, spruce up one of the 10 memorials on base June 23.



Above: Members of Team Thule receive directions to the memorial markers they will be cleaning up as part of the memorial cleanup program.



Left: Senior Airmen Sabrina Reyes and Nichalos Grady, 821st Air Base Group, polish a memorial plaque located in front of the base headquarters building.

Photos by 1st Lt. Nicole Langley

Sea Bird cargo ship arrives, 30 day port season begins

821st Air Base Group Public Affairs

After navigating through fields of icebergs, the Sea Bird emerged from fog at Thule Air Base, Greenland, home of the world's northernmost deepwater port more than 700 miles inside the Arctic Circle.

The ship's June 30 arrival formally opened the 30-day Arctic port season. Within two hours, stevedores and port operators began off loading cargo containers filled with vital construction supplies, vehicles and dry goods.

"It's exciting to see the pier spring to life when the first ship arrives at the Top of the World. When you're as far north as we are, the only way to get critical supplies to the base is either by aircraft or cargo ships," said Col. Lee-Volker Cox, Thule Air Base commander. "Sealift enables us to receive mission-impacting cargo, supplies and equipment at a much lower cost than airlift."

In less than 12 hours, the Sea Bird's 107 cargo containers and flat racks were offloaded. Over 1,270 metric tons of cargo were also processed. Shortly thereafter, the ship was steaming back into iceberg-filled Arctic waters. The harbor and bay are ice free for only two to three months each year. Therefore, the base must rapidly process the cargo it receives. In 2007, ships made 11



Photo by Col. Lee-Volker Cox

THULE AIR BASE, Greenland -- The Sea Bird cargo ship docks in the world's northernmost deepwater port here June 30. In less than 12 hours, the Sea Bird's 107 cargo containers and flat racks were off-loaded and over 1,270 metric tons of cargo was processed. The arrival of the ship marked the formal opening of the 30-day Arctic port season.

port calls at this extreme northern port. Over 7,000 tons of cargo and 9 million gallons of fuel were processed, ensuring the base was fully stocked for the winter and ready to begin construction projects. "The port is instrumental to ensuring continued success of our space superiority missions during our long,

harsh Arctic winter. We have 30 days to offload at least five cargo ships and two tankers with more than 15 million gallons of fuel this year. Without these essential supplies, Thule Air Base's existence is jeopardized."

Do you know where this photo was taken?



Do you know where this photo was taken? Can you be the first one on base to identify it? The first person to correctly identify it will receive \$5 in TOW Club Bucks. If you're up to the challenge, email the correct answer to: nicole.langley@thule.af.mil.

Congratulations to the winners of the last 'Do you know' contest:

**Capt. Dave Simms
Tech. Sgt. Michael Bradley.**

Photo by Col. Lee-Volker Cox

Seeing double?



Photo by Col. Lee-Volker Cox

While Thule Air Base's flight-line is usually relatively quiet, in early June it appeared that the base had become an ATI hub when one of their cargo planes was on the ground at the same time as the weekly rotator cargo/passenger combination aircraft. ATI is the contract airlift company that flies passengers and supplies in and out of the DoD's northernmost installation each week.



For the first time in more than 40 years, an Arctic overland traverse across the Polar Ice Cap was accomplished, establishing a supply route from Thule Air Base to Summit Station — a remote scientific research station. The traverse was completed by the National Science foundation and began May 5. The team reached Summit June 24. Thule AB was the team's starting point and provided support as they prepared for the long trip.

Greenland Inland Traverse



Photos taken upon the GIT arrival at Summit June 24.

Celebrating America's Independence at the Top of the World

From the annual golf tournament on top of Mount Dundas, softball tournament, barbecue, and live performance by visiting band, The Scarlet Ending, Thule Air Base celebrated the 4th of July in high style — enough to make any American proud!



Softball champs — 821st Security Forces Squadron

Northernmost golf tournament in the world — on top of Mount Dundas!





Photos by Col. Lee-Volker Cox

Over the last year, Team Thule aggressively addressed several base security shortfalls. Base defense munitions were being stored in the U.S., resulting in a two-day delivery time if they were required. As the summer construction season continues, workers break ground on the new 821st Security Forces Squadron Armory, which will allow on-base storage and provide space of guard mount.



Thule transitions out of muddy season, roads in need of constant maintenance



Photos by Col. Lee-Volker Cox



Coming out of the Arctic winter and spring mud season, Thule Air Base's 60 miles of road need considerable maintenance. Workers operating graders, water trucks, dump trucks and other construction equipment work relentlessly to restore the roads in order to reduce wear and tear on vehicles.